

C. Remarks

The claims are 1-48 and 50-56, with claims 1, 22, 23, 25, 47, 48 and 51 being independent. Claim 49 has been cancelled. Claims 20, 21, 45 and 46 have been withdrawn from consideration, as being directed to non-elected inventions. Claims 1, 22 and 47 have been amended to better define the present invention and to improve their form. Support for this amendment may be found, inter alia, in the specification at page 55, lines 21-24. Claims 23, 25, 48 and 51 have been rewritten in independent form. Claim 37 has been amended to improve their form. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the present claims is expressly requested.

Claim 22 is objected to for formal reasons. Applicants have amended claim 22 to resolve this issue. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-19, 22, 24, 26-44, 47, 49 and 50 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by JP 2000-285751 (Hirahara). The grounds of rejection are respectfully traversed.

Prior to addressing the merits of rejection, Applicants would like to briefly discuss some of the key features of the invention claims in the above-recited claims. That invention, in part, is related to an ion conductor structural body, a process for producing it and a rechargeable battery comprising it. The ion conductor structural body includes a polymer matrix, a solvent capable of functioning as a plasticizer and an electrolyte. Importantly, the content of the solvent is in a range of 1 to 20 in terms of a ratio of the weight of the solvent and the weight of the polymer matrix. This prevents the mechanical strength of the structural body from being reduced (page 55, line 24 - page 56, line 1).

Hirahara is directed to the manufacture of a solid polymer electrolyte used for manufacturing a primary cell or a rechargeable battery. This polymer solid electrolyte

however, does not actively include a solvent. Applicants submit that Hirahara fails to disclose or suggest that the content of the solvent is in a range of 1 to 20 in terms of a ratio of the weight of the solvent and the weight of the polymer matrix. Accordingly, Hirahara cannot affect the patentability of the presently claimed invention.

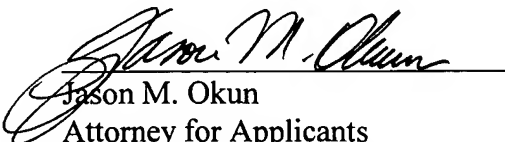
The Examiner stated in the Office Action that claims 23, 25, 48 and 51-56 would be allowed if they are rewritten in independent form. Applicants have rewritten claims 23, 25, 48 and 51 accordingly (claims 52-56 depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 51). Thus, claims 23, 25, 48 and 51-56 should now be allowed.

Applicants request that claims 20, 21, 45 and 46 be rejoined and allowed, since claims 1 and 22, from which these claims depend, either directly or indirectly, are allowable for the reasons discussed above.

Wherefore, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection be withdrawn and that the present case be passed to issue.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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